

As we turn our thoughts to a new year, Americans have every right to be proud of the work of their Government and its employees. They will continue to work vigilantly through the holidays and into the new year so that America may celebrate the arrival of a new millennium.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Transmitting a Report on the  
National Emergency With Respect  
to Burma**

*December 14, 1999*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With  
Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel  
and Foreign Minister Farouk  
al-Shara of Syria**

*December 15, 1999*

***Middle East Peace Process***

**The President.** Good morning. It is an honor to welcome Prime Minister Barak, Foreign Minister Shara, and the members of the Israeli and Syrian delegations here to the White House.

When the history of this century is written, some of its most illustrious chapters will be the stories of men and women who put old rivalries and conflicts behind them and looked ahead to peace and reconciliation for their children. What we are witnessing today is not yet peace, and getting there will re-

quire bold thinking and hard choices. But today is a big step along that path.

Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara are about to begin the highest level meeting ever between their two countries. They are prepared to get down to business. For the first time in history, there is a chance of a comprehensive peace between Israel and Syria and, indeed, all its neighbors.

That Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara chose to come here to Washington reminds us of one other fact, of course, which is the United States own responsibility in this endeavor. Secretary Albright and I and our entire team will do everything we possibly can to help the parties succeed, for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East is vital not only to the region; it is also vital to the world and to the security of the American people, for we have learned from experience that tensions in the region can escalate, and the escalations can lead into diplomatic, financial, and ultimately, military involvement, far more costly than even the costliest peace.

We should be clear, of course, the success of the enterprise we embark upon today is not guaranteed. The road to peace is no easier, and in many ways it is harder, than the road to war. There will be challenges along the way, but we have never had such an extraordinary opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement.

Prime Minister Barak, an exceptional hero in war, is now a determined soldier for peace. He knows a negotiated peace, one that serves the interests of all sides, is the only way to bring genuine security to the people of Israel, to see that they are bound by a circle of peace.

President Asad, too, has known the cost of war. From my discussion with him in recent months, I am convinced he knows what a true peace could do to lift the lives of his people and give them a better future. And Foreign Minister Shara is an able representative of the President and the people of Syria.

Let me also say a brief word about the continuing progress of the Palestinian track. Chairman Arafat also has embarked on a courageous quest for peace, and the Israelis and the Palestinians continue to work on that.